

# Compilation of SMART Teacher Responses

February 2011

## #1 Highlight the aspects of the program that worked best

- Building capacity for technology integration with staff members through shared uses of technology, sharing of resources, and enthusiasm generated by the use of technology.
- Access to technology was key to increasing integration of technology into lessons through an increased motivation to learn. Laptop was key for building resources at home.
- Student response to technology overwhelmingly positive with preferences for submitting online assignments, increase in confidence/skills with technology as well as increased communication with students and parents through blogs and wikis. Students were doing more than just AR tests on the computer.
- We were able to use the Smart board in daily lessons, tools such as:
  - Smart software (linking videos, webpages);
  - assessment tools (Senteo Assessment tools to enhance formative assessment process in classroom);
  - Wikis and Blogs for student, parent, teacher and administration communication;
  - Off-site tutors (hospital tutors or traditional tutors) using teacher wikis and blogs; student publishing using classroom blogs;
  - Interactive for students – increase student participation;
  - Teacher accountability – the ability to save and print what we discussed during the class;
  - Good for students who cannot copy notes from board (or even jot notes) or for students who miss classes.
- Collaborative planning time with other SMART teachers provided opportunities to teach and learn from each other. This built confidence to share with other teachers in school buildings the things learned from the SMART meetings or PD.
- Having more than one person at a school was identified as helpful to share resources and have more frequent opportunities to collaborate and share.
- Differentiated PD allowed participants to connect their learning to their classroom needs and learning styles but it could be challenging to decide if your focus was on the “right” track

## #2 Outline the benefits experienced from the program.

- With increased teacher access and electronic files, students also require increased physical access to technology.
- Students can review information using Notebook and access it immediately is very beneficial
- Having the Smart board has renewed our energy and enthusiasm – Having the technology whether it's a Smart board or an airliner... has propelled us into constantly looking for ways to improve our teaching. Whether it's learning how to integrate another form of technology that captures our students interest or ideas for planning.
- PD Sessions serve to renew and energize participants to share new technologies and ideas with students.
- Students in turn are more motivated to learn with technology and complete electronic assignments (ie: glogster, kidblog, voki avatar links) and more motivated to present to the class using the SMART Board with better interpersonal skills
- Support for technology devices is very important and has helped smooth transitions.
- More time on task with less paper for handing in assignments, sharing resources, etc.

### #3 Define the challenges experienced as a part of this program.

- Increases to school level support and guidance with school administration involvement more prominent and more than one person at the school with a SMART Board would also be beneficial. Administration needs to build a technology focused community in the school where all staff and students understand that technology is a main focus for the school.
- TIME to plan, research, and share ideas as there is never enough of this
  - Technology Expert at the school to collaborate with staff, team teach, build lessons, etc.
  - Time built into day to collaborate, team teach, find resources
  - Including technology sessions at institute to build more awareness
- Education regarding appropriate use of SMART Board for other people....not just a “TV screen”.
- Student integration of technology challenged by lack of home support, especially regarding communication or homework for minorities. Yet, some teachers felt that the integration of technology at school was an enhancement for those students who don’t have any other avenue to build these skills.
- **Lack of access to laptop over the summer when reimaging is done.** (x3)
- Limitations of project to SMARTBoards as the only model for technology integration. Some would prefer I-pods, laptop access, or other technology tools with a data projector for increased student access to technology. Rapidly changing technologies make firm decisions regarding technology integration a continuing challenge.
- SMART board files take a lot of time to put together or convert from other file formats....some prefer Powerpoint. Many have mainly used SMART Board files found on the internet.
- Changes to teaching assignments can impact usage
- Wireless slate less interactive than SMART Board for students.
- **Lack of mobility for transfers, maternity leave, classroom movement** as teachers have adopted files and a teaching style closely tied with technology that would be challenged without access to technology. Recommendations include getting new equipment for the existing project participant as a natural expansion of the project.
- Concerns regarding the next steps of the project and the mental stress of worrying over losing the technology access
- Monitoring the accountability of the integration of technology to ensure it is being utilized appropriately.

### #4 Identify recommendations for the program to continue to build capacity for technology integration.

- Keep the application process in place with the yearly checkpoints to ensure professional accountability to the board.
- Allow all teachers in the program to keep their technology whether they transfer or return from maternity leave. Purchase new equipment to be assembled in the new school if needed. This would ensure continuity and better motivate teachers to build resources.
- Sessions for the summer and pay us the sub wage.... It saves money overall, and teachers would be refreshed and have time to plan further beyond their day. (X4)
- Open wireless codes or expand wireless to enable students to bring their own devices. Ensure that school policy allows for use of personal devices to facilitate student learning on their devices.
- Flexibility in the program to select technologies that will best fit the teaching paradigms and needs of the school community as decided by administrations.
- Leadership and Mentorship – has to be a priority of the in-school administrator.

- Time has to be built into the day – give a teacher (preferably the SMART teacher) a half day in a 5-day cycle to collaborate with teachers, team teach, build lessons, etc. This would empower the staff to have someone in house who is easily accessible.
  - Goals need to be set at the beginning of the school year that are integrated into our SMART goals so teachers realize that technology is not an “add on”.
- Senior Admin needs to attend our meetings and see the level of commitment we have and have a personal connection with what we are doing
- SMART teachers – have opportunities to explore various forms of technology that will fit with our teaching styles
  - Example: possibility of having some type of application process (something like a Sterling McDowell Grant) for resources where teacher(s) can submit a proposal with goals and outline resources needed and how they will accomplish these goals.